

# Catholic Theatre Conference

Vol XII

DECEMBER, 1958

President  
Therese Marie Cuny

Secretarial Office  
2644 Lawndale Avenue  
Evanston, Illinois

Vice-President  
Sister M. Angelita B.V.M.

## THE LIGHT TOUCH

by Edgar L. Kloten

*Edgar L. Kloten needs little introduction to the members of the Conference. His productions, while at Fordham University, were marked by originality in presentation and real artistry in the creation of character. His rich experience as both a director and a teacher makes this article we believe, one of unquestioned merit and interest. At the present time Mr. Kloten is free-lancing as a director. His last production took him to Bermuda where he directed a professional company.*

Emerson has said, "Light is the first of painters. There is no object so foul that intense light will not make it more beautiful." As far as the theatre is concerned, this statement doesn't quite hold. If you really have a bad play, no amount of light in any kind of variation and combinations can make it beautiful. It is only necessary to examine some of the openings on Broadway in the spectacle class to verify this. Some extravaganzas have enough light and equipment to reveal a night squadron of planes flying at 20,000 feet, but still it isn't enough to save the show. Sometimes, it would help if we couldn't see so well and our enjoyment of the modern theatre would certainly increase if we had slightly impaired hearing! One can hardly believe one's ears, much less the play!

But, to get back to Emerson, it is true that light — in the theatre — might well be called "the first of painters." The theatre of the 20th Century has this one basic element which brings new life, vitality, brilliance, nuance and meaning and overall illusion to the play. It is the ribbon on the corsage, the icing on the cake, the fancy spread on the bed, the thing that makes the object more enticing and exciting. But there must be a well-blended cake, a well-made bed and fresh flowers underneath!

So we come to light the play (we hope it's a good one) and in the case at hand — in the Arena Theatre. It certainly would be futile for me to dwell at length on the technical aspects of the problem. Lekos, fresnels, birdseyes, gels, angles and cross-cutting are im-

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Sister Jsoeph Leona  
York Catholic High School  
459 W. King Street  
York, Pennsylvania

## DETROIT THEATRE DAY

The second annual THEATRE DAY of the Detroit area of the C.T.C. was held on November 21st at Marygrove College. Members of this area, always unflagging in their interest and enthusiasm, gave ample evidence of being able to couple these qualities with well organized effort and achievement. Approximately 700 were in attendance for the plays, discussions, demonstrations, and talks that marked the day's schedule.

The program opened with Holy Mass in the Sacred Heart Chapel. Professor Richard Burguin of the University of Detroit then gave the keynote address. Two one-act plays presented by the Servite and the Dominican high schools, followed by group discussions closed the morning session. THE CATHOLIC THEATRE AND THE CATHOLIC was the subject of an address by Father Crowley of Assumption University (Windsor, Ontario) which opened the afternoon session. A one-act play, written by the University of Detroit and produced by the Catholic Theatre of Detroit, followed. Discussion on directors' and students' problems was given an hour of the afternoon's schedule after which Mercy College gave a demonstration of Dance in Drama. Professor Patrick Blaney, University of Detroit, gave the final talk addressing the group on the value and importance of the Catholic Theatre Conference. The Day ended with Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament at 4:00 in the Chapel.

## THE MARIAN YEAR

In recognition of the Marian Year, the CTC suggests your consideration of the following plays:

SEVEN MIRRORS ..... Immaculate Heart College  
SONG OF BERNADETTE ..... Werfel-Kerr  
OUR LADY OF FATIMA .. Rev. Urban Nagle, O.P.  
TIDINGS BROUGHT TO MARY ... Henri Gheon  
LOURDES ..... Gilbert Parker

## THE LIGHT TOUCH (Continued)

portant but each theatre has special problems and a wide range of kinds and types of equipment. It may vary from three borders, a fresnel and a flood to the Izenour light control board. So this article will consider the case of Arena "lighting" rather than Arena "lights." We will try to suggest approaches that have worked or that might be feasible with whatever kind of equipment you have. Equipment isn't everything anyway. It is the sensitivity behind the materials in terms of your approach to the play and what it means, which produces the illusion and creates the aesthetic attitude. This is the all-important ingredient in theatrical entertainment.

When we keep this fundamental goal in mind with whatever we are doing in the Arena, the following points become clear:

1. The play must be adapted to the form and sometimes reconciled to the medium by changes in locale and line.
2. The demands of the script must be carefully considered and their possibility of achievement in the Arena realized.
3. An approach must be decided upon for the particular play selected which harmonizes with the Arena stage on which it is to be presented and the facilities at hand.
4. The lighting must be planned and executed to achieve unobtrusiveness, believability and artistic effect.

The last point about lighting may be the keynote to the whole Arena process. The purpose of lighting in the arena need not be the same as in the proscenium theatre. Naturalistic lighting, shadows, nuances of light and shade may be just as important and effective because of the intimate quality of theatre-in-the-round as any attempt to light each and every face and each and every area uniformly. The intimacy of arena staging, one of its advantages, requires that the lighting be subtle, unobtrusive yet adequate. The audience should not be conscious of light sources but must be drawn into the living picture and respond with faith and confidence. To achieve all this in the Arena with lights is a big problem.

Let us first examine the presentation of realistic plays in the Arena. The very nature of the realistic play demands more believability on the part of the production as well as on the part of the audience and this is even more true in the theatre-in-the-round form. When a play is stripped away from its milieu and depends chiefly on what furniture and props are laid down plus sustained acting, so necessary in the Arena, the job of creating illusion and the audience response becomes a great challenge. To light a realistic play in the arena form with metal containers

emanating strong beams of light from overhead and which have no place in a kitchen, a drawing room, steam bath or tropical hospital requires ingenuity and resourcefulness. They must be there somewhere but they must not dominate the action or the scene. The two qualities, ingenuity and resourcefulness, are of the essence, especially when there are not too many metal containers from Century or Kliegl but the lighting technician has to rely on five birdseyes, two floods and strip border!

The Arena Stage in Washington, D.C. solved the problem of illusion in their presentation of "The Hasty Heart" by John Patrick by using a ceiling piece over the acting area made of scrim and suggesting the camouflaged roof for the locale of the play and the time of the action. The sides were slightly extended from the top by an irregular valance and the top was split and opened so that the beams of the spots could shine directly through. The openings would not be absolutely necessary, however, as the beams of the spots would pierce the scrim-like gauze without too much loss in intensity. It was this roof-like ceiling which gave unity to the production, tied the acting elements together into a well-rounded whole and created the believability necessary to the appreciation of the play. What equipment was used above the acting area and around the sides to light the show was not important. I believe that with very meager and simplified lighting, a similar effect of creating illusion could be produced. If makeshift spots, birdseyes, stove-pipe high hats on wide angle spots are all that you have, be sure you place them for the best result and try to eliminate as much spill as possible. But more important, find the "gimmick" or the scenic trick which theatrically and illusionistically will hold the credence and the attention of your spectators.

In the arena theatre productions presented at Fordham, a similar device of ceiling pieces over the acting area was used to tie in the play, help create the illusion and compensate for the loss of full scenic effects. William Riva, who devised many of the technical developments, designed ceiling effects through which general lighting was introduced for most of the theatre-in-the-round presentations at that University.

For Saroyan's "Sam Ego's House," a blue nylon sky was stretched taut above the acting space with small stylized clouds placed casually around the edge. The setting was all in the open air and so needed lots of light and a feeling of spaciousness. Two open strip borders were hung lengthwise along the edges of the elliptical form above the sky and the intensity of the light could be increased or lowered by dinner control to regulate the amount of light and thus indicate the time of the day. Fresnels were hung from openings around and outside of the edge of the sky to supplement the general lighting from the sky effect for special scenes.

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## NEWS FROM WEST CENTRAL REGION

A most enthusiastic response to Sister Mary Olive's suggestions for increasing Regional activity was received from Father Johnston, Regional Chairman of the West Central Region. He has already held four business meetings in his Region at which suggestions for Regional activity were heartily approved and put into effect; plans for Festivals were organized; a monthly Regional news-letter was decided upon; Regional dues were approved; and most important of all, a Regional Convention was planned for March in Oklahoma City. The co-chairmen of areas within the West Central Region were appointed:

Co-chairman for St. Louis Area —  
Sister M. Jeannine, S.S.N.D.  
Rosati-Kain High School  
4389 Lindell Blvd.  
St. Louis 8, Missouri

Co-chairman for Kansas City Area —  
Mrs. Loretto G. Purcell  
5329 Rockhill Road  
Kansas City 4, Missouri

Co-chairman for Wichita Area —  
Mrs. L. G. Bujarski  
Sacred Heart College  
Wichita, Kansas

Co-chairman for Omaha Area —  
Sister Mary Tarcisius, R.S.M.  
St. Mary High School  
27th and St. Mary's Avenue  
Omaha, Nebraska

Co-chairman for Oklahoma City Area —  
Sister Mary Immaculata, O.S.B.  
Catholic High School  
No. Frances at 50th St.  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

1. Local St. Louis Area Play Festival planned for December 4 and 5. Sponsors this year: Xavier High School, B.V.M., Mrs. Catherine Walsh, Director. This will be the first theatre event in their new building with a theatre that is the envy of all high schools in the city.

2. Following the business meetings in St. Louis and Kansas City, Oklahoma City was voted as the scene of the Regional Convention to be held on the weekend of March 26th. Host will be Catholic High School, Oklahoma City.

### 3. Election of Regional Officers:

Chairman: Sr. M. Immaculata, O.S.B., Catholic High School, Oklahoma City.

Secretary: Sr. M. Patrick, C.D.P.

Vice-Chairman: Rev. R. A. Johnston, S.J., St. Louis University, St. Louis, Missouri.

Treasurer: Sister Rose Edward, C.S.J., St. Anthony's High School, St. Louis, Missouri.

### 4. St. Louis Local Area Officers:

President: Sister Mary Jeannine, S.S.N.D., Rosati-Kain H.S., St. Louis, Missouri.

Secretary-Treasurer: Mrs. John Lawder, St. Louis, Missouri.

## HAVE YOU A FEW MOMENTS?

Your monthly Production Calendar is the life-line keeping you in contact with the other members of CTC. It is OUR ONLY LINK, with the exception of regional and national conferences. For this reason we, who turn out the news each month, recognize the importance and value of this monthly periodical. It should meet with more than just a passing glance — it should be something you look forward to as a friend, something you turn to for constructive help in building interest and achieving results with your own group. We want it to be all of that but there are times when we wonder whether or not we are achieving that goal.

As a result of an increase in membership since September, as well as the new high school and college membership, our circulation has jumped from 400 to 1150. The varied tastes and desires of these hundreds of people is difficult to reduce to a common denominator.

Will you, then, in an effort to help us to help you, take a few minutes of your time to fill in the questionnaire below and return it to us. Your cooperation in this will be greatly appreciated. Sign it, or leave it unsigned, — as you will, — and please mail it to Secretarial office, 2644 Lawndale Avenue, Evanston, Illinois.

Should the Production Calendar be limited to news of activities by member groups, or do you favor inclusion of feature articles?

Have the Production Work Sheets been interesting or helpful, or both?

Is the selection of plays for royalty reduction one that meets the needs of your group?

Do you read the advertisements?

Have you patronized any of these advertisers as a result of the ad?

Would you like to have included in the Production Calendar a section devoted to an interchange of ideas between members?

Further comments or suggestions:

## CROSS COUNTRY CIRCUIT

### COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY

Marymount College of Los Angeles has just completed a successful production of *ANGEL STREET*. A series of one-act plays by the Play Production class will wind up the college program before the holidays.

Theatre Guild of St. Xavier College (Chicago) is staging the *CANTICLE OF THE NATIVITY* by Rene-Richard Bechet on December 16.

Christopher Fry's *THE LADY'S NOT FOR BURNING* was presented by Rosary College (Chicago) on December 4th and 6th.

The Loras Players (Loras College, Dubuque, Iowa) report a presentation of *PYGMALION* in late October. The play opened the forty-third season. Reverend Karl G. Schroeder is the director.

*THE GRASS HARP* was chosen as the seventh annual arena production by the Clarke College Players. Sister Xavier B.V.M. was the technical director and Fred Syburg was Dramatic director of this unusual and highly entertaining production.

College of New Rochelle opened its year's program with *AS YOU LIKE IT* in early November. Edgar L. Kloten was the director.

The Players Club of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College presented *SEVEN MIRRORS* in the Cecilian Auditorium on November 7th. Sister Mary Olive was the director and musical background was arranged by Sister Cecilia Clare.

An impressive program from St. Louis University indicates not only success up to date but plans to offer even more to its large audience. The season-ticket plan which started two years ago with 90 members now boasts 450 regular theatregoers. Along with its regular program of plays, the University offers classic movies, six during the course of the academic year. The Student Theatre Workshop, directed by Joan Hoogstraet, presented *THEY REFUSE TO BE RESURRECTED* and *PACK UP YOUR TROUBLES* in late October, then in mid-November followed with *THE BOOR* and *THE POT BOILER*. Other productions are planned monthly throughout the year.

*DOUBLE DOOR* was highly applauded by audiences of Immaculate Heart College (Los Angeles, Cal.) Now their director, Joseph Rice, is working on an arena production of *THE YOUNG AND FAIR*.

The Argus Eyes Dramatic Society of St. Peter's College brought to life again the colorful and exciting Irish Revolution in the production of Sean O'Casey's *THE PLOUGH AND THE STARS*. It was presented December 2, 3 and 5th at the College Auditorium in Jersey City, New Jersey.

College of St. Scholastica (Duluth, Minn.) presented Mary Louise Hickey, well known oral interpreter in the solo-drama *BARRETT'S OF WIMPOLE STREET* on November 4th.

Sister Annella, O.S.B., the director of the Drama Department, heads a study group composed of women of the American Association of University Women members, Duluth branch. Recently, Sister was chosen as one of three judges for the annual "Voice of Democracy" radio speech contest presented over Station KDAL.

Four television productions are in the production-planning stage which will be telecasted over WF-TV during the course of this school year. The themes of the four telecasts are: "Liturgical Music," "The Story of Christmas Through Painting," "Duluth's Cancer Research Laboratory," and "The Function of Women in the Educational World."

Dicken's "A Christmas Carol," adapted by Coral Wilson Greenwood, will be dramatized by the Playmakers' Guild and prescribed on December 11th, Rockhurst Auditorium.

Catholic University Theatre opened its season with *HENRY IV* which ran from October 30th to November 14th. Now, *ANTIGONE* has taken over the stage and will play until December 19th.

Reverend Matthias Kucera was the director of *SHADOW AND SUBSTANCE* which was produced by the St. Procopius College Players on October 30th and November 1st.

Mask and Foil, Drama club of Chestnut Hill College (Philadelphia, Pa.) gave their first efforts of the year to *LUTE SONG*. The director was Miriam Davenport Gow. An arrangement of Chinese windows, imaginatively and cleverly designed and executed by the Art department permitted some unusual effects in production and offered much flexibility in setting.

On November 18th the Marymount College Dramatic Club presented *THE HEIRESS* in Spellman Auditorium under the direction of Louis Tanno. Menotti's *AMAH* and *THE NIGHT VISITORS* was presented on December 12th under the direction of Hugh Ross and in conjunction with the Marymount College Glee Club and the United States Military Academy Glee Club.

Frank Hanley, Drama director of Mount St. Mary's College (Los Angeles, Cal.) presented the Mount Masquers in *CRAIG'S WIFE* in early November. This group, newly named and reorganized, has an ambitious program which includes four laboratory productions, in drama quartette style — the first, *TWELFTH NIGHT*, to be produced in early January.

Honadra, Drama club of Holy Names College (Spokane, Washington) will give *DEAR BRUTUS* on January 17th.

On November 8, 9, and 10 Christ Brother College (Memphis, Tenn.) presented *CHARLEY'S AUNT* under the direction of Brother Roger, F.S.C.



Johhny Player of St. John's University (Collegeville, Minn.) assisted by the Ardeleons, College of St. Benedict, (St. Joseph, Minn.) presented Christopher Fry's *THE LADY'S NOT FOR BURNING* on November 14 and 15. Reverend Dominic, O.S.B. directed the play. By way of audience preparation, five faculty members of the College of St. Benedict presented a symposium on the play at convocation programs both at College of St. Benedict and at St. John's. The divisions of the symposium were as follows:

The story of the play ..... Sister Clarus

The characters ..... Sister Linnea

The poetry ..... Sister Mariella

Meaning of the play ..... Sister Kristin

Fry's place in the theatre .. Sister Marcine

The Ardeleons are now busy in rehearsal of *THE HEIRESS* which will be staged in January.

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### COMMUNITY THEATRE

The Blackfriars' Guild (New York City), under the direction of Charlotte Knight presented *LATE ARRIVAL* by Charles Oxtan from October 19th to November 24th. Reverend Thomas F. Carey, O.P. is Moderator of the Guild.

Early February is the time set for the St. John Drama Club's (Whiting, Ind.) production of *DETECTIVE STORY*. This drama is the Whiting parish's second offering for the 1953-'54 Theatre Series. *SONG OF NORWAY* was staged by the Whiting thespians in mid-October under the direction of Evelyn Sabol and Mary Mores. John Gazda directs the predominantly male cast for *DETECTIVE STORY*. The Whiting troupe will round out the season with *THE GREAT BIG DOORSTEP* to be given in the spring with Irene Gregorovich directing.

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### HIGH SCHOOL

Immaculate Conception Academy (Davenport, Iowa) has been following a schedule of productions that leaves one a little breathless with the short lapses of time between productions. *IDOLS* was their contribution to the Clarke College Drama Festival on November 14th and 15th. *OUR MISS BROOKS* followed and was presented December 4, 5, and 6th. An elaborately planned and staged fashion show entitled *NIGHT AND DAY* was given on October 9th.

The Senior Dramatic Class of Academy of Holy Angels (Minneapolis, Minn.) produced *MURDER IN A NUNNERY* on November 20th and 22nd. Margaret Kane was director. Male roles were played by Seniors from De La Salle high School.

The Drama group of Our Lady of Mercy (Detroit, Mich.) will collaborate with the Senior Chorale, on December 17, in the presentation of "Light of the World," a Christmas Cantata, woven around the Gospel of St. Luke.

Masque and Sandalers of Los Angeles Catholic Girls' High School held a Drama workshop festival during the week of November 2nd. Plays chosen for presentation were *THE MASQUE OF THE TWO STRANGERS* an allegorical fantasy, *THE MAKER OF DREAMS* a romantic fantasy, *THE TWILIGHT SAINT* a drama of St. Francis of Assisi, and *WELSH HONEYMOON* a comedy. Productions were under the guidance of Sister M. Consilia, I.H.M., Drama director of the school.

St. Joseph's Academy (St. Paul, Minn.) is another of the high schools that is letting no time go to waste on it's calendar of productions. On October 25th they presented *THE FIGHTING LITTLES* with a double cast of girls. Boys parts were played by members of Cretin Drama Club. On November 14th, they participated in the Twin-City Drama Festival, presenting *WHITE IRIS* as their entry. On December 1st, the occasion of the first Genesian Player initiation, they produced *SKIN DEEP* and *TELL DORIE NOT TO CRY* — both directed by Senior Drama students. December 23rd will find Sophomore Drama students in presentation of *AT THE FEET OF THE MADONNA*. The senior Drama students will have charge of the technical direction. Efforts are being made to have the Drama department corelate their work with that of the other departments of the school by acting as hostesses and by offering trained stage crews to other departments in their use of the auditorium.

St. Mary's Catholic High School of New Haven, Connecticut, under the direction of Sister M. Joan of Arc, O.P., presented Sir James Barrie's romantic drama of the Napoleonic era, *QUALITY STREET*, on November 20 and 21, at the Fair Haven Jr. High School auditorium.

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### CHILDREN'S THEATRE

Under the direction of Frances Carey Bowen, The Children's Educational Theatre of Johns Hopkins University presents the following four plays on it's subscription program: *PINOCCHIO*, *LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD*, *FOUR AND TWENTY BLACK BIRDS*, and *THE SILVER THREAD*. All plays are presented at the Playshop on the campus.

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### MAY WE SUGGEST . . .

That in acquainting others with membership in CTC, you remember that there is a \$1.00 initiation fee. So many prospective members send in the required information and dues but forget the initiation fee, thus necessitating additional correspondence and the trouble of making out another check. It will help us at the secretarial office and convenience the new member if you will remember this, please!

## THE WELCOME MAT

- St. Elizabeth High School  
Chicago, Illinois  
Director: Sister M. Austin
- Catholic Theatre Guild  
Richmond, Virginia  
Director: Rev. John P. Hannon
- Columbian Women's Club  
St. Paul, Minnesota
- St. Agatha School  
Howard, South Dakota  
Director: Sister M. Loyola, O.S.F.
- T. J. Sokol Association  
Little Ferry, New Jersey
- St. Catherine Junior College  
St. Catherine, Kentucky  
Director: Sister M. Judith, O.P.
- Los Angeles Catholic Girls' High School  
Los Angeles, California  
Director: Sister M. Consilia, I.H.M.
- Cathedral High School  
Los Angeles, California  
Director: Brother Roger Celestine, F.S.C.
- St. Benedict High School  
Chicago, Illinois  
Director: Sister M. Patricius, O.S.F.
- Frances Cary Bowen  
The Johns Hopkins University  
Baltimore, Maryland
- Sister Marita, S.L.  
Loretto Academy  
Kansas City, Missouri
- Joan M. Thellusson  
New York, New York
- Christian Brothers College  
Memphis, Tennessee  
Director: Brother Roger
- Mr. W. McNulty  
San Antonio Little Theatre  
San Antonio, Texas
- Catholic Theatre Guild of Indianapolis  
Indianapolis, Indiana
- Rev. John J. Ward, O.M.I.  
San Antonio, Texas
- June Reed  
Houston, Texas
- Incarnate Word Academy  
Houston, Texas  
Director: Sister M. Bernard
- Sister M. Genevieve, O.P.  
St. Anthony High School  
Beaumont, Texas
- Mother Peter Nolosco, C.C.V.I.  
Mount Carmel Academy  
Fort Worth, Texas
- Convent of the Sacred Heart  
Lake Forest, Illinois

## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK . . . .

As we approach that magic moment called Christmas eve, we stand mystified by the awfulness and the majesty of this greatest of all Dramas opening on the scene of Bethlehem, reaching its climax in the tragedy of Calvary, and closing on the miracle of the open tomb at Easter. Time stands still — the past, present, and the future merge in the quiet, introspective moment when we kneel before the Creator in a crib. Surely our work can find no greater inspiration than here!

May the love and faith that radiated from the Crib at Bethlehem reflect in all our hearts and in all our efforts!

"God bless us, every one!"

## REGIONAL CHAIRMAN

The Board of Directors will meet on December 29th at the Edgewater Beach Hotel in Chicago. Regional Chairmen are invited to attend. We strongly urge attendance at this meeting so that you may both present problems of your region and submit plans for the coming year. Your voice is needed in decision of national problems. Please make every effort to be there. We shall be glad to make reservations or any arrangements for your stay here in Chicago if you will notify us promptly.

## PLEASE NOTE!

Deadline date for news items has been changed to the 10th of each month.

## PLEASE!

Requests for royalty reduction should be made at least 30 days before presentation and preferably before rehearsals have begun. Members too frequently expect the Conference office and the play publisher's office to rush these requests — something that isn't always possible. We are reluctant to disappoint you in any way and feel that it will be to your interest if you will remember that these requests require time.

Other information that should be included:

- 1) dates of play
- 2) price of admission
- 3) seating capacity of auditorium

- St. Francis Academy  
Joliet, Illinois
- St. Philip High School  
Chicago, Illinois
- St. Gregory High School  
Chicago, Illinois
- Ursuline Academy  
Louisville, Kentucky  
Director: Sister M. Antonio



# HIGH SCHOOL THEATRE

## A HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT SPEAKS

"Five minutes to go." "Where's that vase?" "Straighten that picture, please." "On stage everybody, let's say our prayer to St. Genesius." The orchestra ceases, house lights dim, stage lights brighten, curtain goes up, mood music swells, and you start to act.

From the time that the curtain opens until it closes you are in a different world, everything has a different meaning. Your every action is that of another person, for you are another person. You are not Sally Jones but Jeanne d' Arc in armor, or Elizabeth the Queen in brocade, or Cornelia Otis Skinner en route to Paris, and you personify her in thought, word and gesture. There is no thrill comparable to this.

To act is to create a character — to create is to convince an audience of that character's genuineness. To do this is a sensation inconceivable, for drama is the portrayal of life, and is there anything closer to life than life itself? To become transformed into another person, to create a character that hundreds of people either believe in or hate is a stirring and electric power known only to those fortunate enough to find themselves profoundly lost in that magical, absorbing talent — acting. In a moment's time you can carry your audience into distant lands, into your childhood home to remember that "twelfth birthday celebration," or you can bring them to laughter or to tears while re-living a life's experience. All this is part of that magic, illusive, creative world, the theatre — the tiring, endless rehearsals, the quick changes, the falling scenery, the missing props, the messy greasepaint, the broken sound effects record, the "ad libs," and then that exciting **Opening Night**. No where on earth does one experience such an ecstatic felicitous sensation. It is unparalleled. In a few minutes the final curtain rings down and you're taking curtain calls — and — oh those curtain calls! If there is anything so gratifying as the warm, enthusiastic applause of a satisfied audience reverberating through the auditorium it has yet to be found.

Suddenly stage lights dim, house lights brighten, the audience leaves. The play is over. But is it? No, it is never over for those who carry in their hearts the zealous love of a yearning ambition. For this is the theatre, and you are part of it. The memory of its thrills, its excitement, its heartaches, its sensations never die — they live on and on in you. There is nothing that grips like the magnetism of the theatre, nothing so fascinating as acting. On and on you go through play after play experiencing thrill after thrill, for **you** are an actor!! And there is no music so inspiring as those familiar words — "On stage everybody, curtain going up!"

Shirley Marie Fowler  
Bishop Hogan High School  
Kansas City, Missouri

## AFRAID TO OVER-ACT? — READ THIS:—

A long time ago I was taken to see a play. I'm almost sure it was Ibsen's "Master Builder" and I can't recall the name of the star, but I remember one incident as vividly as though it had happened yesterday; during one of the star's most impassioned speeches, he turned his back on the audience and addressed the backdrop. I remember this because everybody was so impressed. They said, "How natural! How true to life!" To be sure, no one back of the third row could hear a word of the speech, but there is no denying that it seemed quite "true to life." For all I know, that performance may have been the start of that naturalistic school of acting, that underplaying, which ultimately reached the point where actors didn't appear to be acting at all. In recent years this fad has been on the decline and it is pleasant to read Alan Bendle's remarks on the subject in England's new Theatre Digest. He writes, "All great acting is, in a sense, overacting. The job of the theatre is to give you life **plus** something — a something that heightens life until it becomes theatre." And, later on in the article — "The restraints actors impose on themselves is in part due to a terrible fear that they may forget themselves and be guilty of what is known as a piece of ham — while all the time, the audience is hoping devoutly that someone will cast discretion to the winds and give it the lyric thunder that it craves." Good for Mr. Bendle! People go to the theatre to see **acting**, not just a reflection of their own humdrum lives. As Bernard Shaw remarked of a hotel that was recommended to him for its "home atmosphere," "Heck, if I'd wanted home atmosphere, I'd have stayed at home!"

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## STAGE FRIGHT?

You will overcome stage fright by thinking, not of how you feel, but of how you want the audience to feel.

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Must you feel a part to act it? Half the world says, "No!" and the other half says, "Yes!" But there is one thing on which most actors and directors agree: You must understand the part. A keen imagination, under perfect control, will help you more than an excess of emotion, under imperfect control. After all, when you are acting, you are acting. You are doing more than merely being yourself on the stage. You are giving a portrayal of another person. Therefore, instead of thinking about how **you** feel about a line, try to analyze the character you are playing, to decide how **he** would feel about that line.

## NEWS FROM HERE AND THERE

**The Masque and Gavel Players of Mother of Mercy High School, Cincinnati, Ohio** presented "Career Angel" on November 8 and 9. Sister Mary Carlos, R.S.M. is the drama director.

**St. Teresa Academy, East St. Louis, Illinois**, has chosen "The Shepherd's Star" by Janet Katherine Smith for its Christmas program. A 90-voice Glee Club will support the players in their production. Members of the Academy Drama Club presented a radio program entitled "Secret Weapon" over a local radio station. The script is a dramatic account of the story of Our Lady of Fatima. It was presented on October 13 — the 36th Anniversary of Our Lady's last appearance to the shepherd children.

**St. Joseph's Academy, St. Paul, Minnesota.** A double cast of girls with the help of boys from Cretin High School produced "The Fighting Littles" on October 25. Girls from the Academy will take the women's roles in "On Borrowed Time," which will be staged by Cretin later this season.

**Immaculate Conception Academy, Dubuque, Iowa.** To honor the memory of Blessed Pius X in this his jubilee year, The Immaculata Players with the Choral Club of the Immaculate Conception Academy, Dubuque, Iowa, presented on November 19 "All Things in Christ," a choric drama by Sister Poverello of the School Sisters of St. Francis. Sister Mary Generose, O.S.F., director of the verse choir; Sister Mary Roban, O.S.F., in charge of the music.

**Indian Pageant of Nativity at Phoenix, Arizona.** One week before Christmas, which has been the custom for the past twelve years, The Phoenix Indian School will present a pageant of the Nativity. The public is admitted free, for this is a United States Government boarding school with an enrollment of more than 700 students representing 25 Indian Tribes. Coming in off the surrounding reservations, many of them have no knowledge of English whatsoever. All of which makes the annual staging of this pageant so remarkable.

About 200 students of various tribes participate in the presentation which features authentic Palestinian costumes, three Hebrew chants, a 75-voice Navajo choir, special lighting effects, and live sheep. Typical of the names appearing in the cast of characters are Keith Tallwood, Wilson Tso, Ida Yellowhair, Willie Zazzie.

From the tiniest angel with tinsel halo to the tallest shepherd watching real sheep, each plays his part convincingly and with reverence. To further add to the solemnity the audience is requested to refrain from applauding.

Attendance at this Indian program is a must with many Phoenixians as well as winter visitors in that area each year. To be assured of a seat one must be there at least a half hour before curtain time. Young Indian girls dressed in authentic costumes of their tribe show the audience to their seats. The audience, of course, includes the proud parents of the participants, many of whom travel quite a distance to come

and beam on the accomplishments of their offspring. This is a dress-up occasion for the "braves" as well as the "squaws" — the men usually outdoing the women as far as silver earrings and necklaces are concerned.

The highlight of the evening is the rendition of Silent Night by the choir in Navajo. The entire audience joins in the singing of O, Come All Ye Faithful, after which everyone leaves with the full Christmas spirit in their hearts.

**Alvernia High School honors Pius X.** The man with the great heart and the penetrating eye, Blessed Pius X. It would be sad if the world of music forgot him this year; it would be equally sad if the Catholic theatre let this anniversary year pass with no stage lights coming up for him. Alvernia High School, Chicago, dedicates a program to Pius X on December 4, 5 and 6. The first part of the program will be a renewal and a clarification of his ideas on the Arts, particularly Church music. The second part centers on his spirit and life with the Choral Readers interpretation of "They Refused to Forget" — a choric speaking number written especially for the occasion by Sister Francis Borgia, O.S.F.

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## THE CACHINNATE AND THE HUMPHER

Are easy to investigate.  
The habits of the Cachinnate  
You'll find his normal habitat  
In any theatre you're at.  
The most accessible of boors,  
His lair's the seat right next to yours.  
He is the man whose laugh is heard  
Above the actors' every word;  
He's so responsive to a joke  
He laughs before the line is spoke;  
And when a gag is made, his glee  
Kills the next line, or two or three.  
In short he is the kind of guy  
Who tells his friends: "I thought I'd die."  
His seat-mate, impotently sad,  
Murmurs: "I rather wish you had."  
The Humpher, on the other hand,  
Is just as hard to understand.  
When laughter bounces off the wall  
The Humpher never laughs at all.  
The puzzling thing about the Humpher  
Is what in heck the creature come fer.

Theatre Arts, June, 1953

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## PLAY PRODUCTION WORK SHEET

### FOUR SONS OF THE ARDENNES

By Herman Closson

Translated by Hugh Dickinson

**Cast:** Thirty-two men, six women. By doubling and tripling minor roles, however, seventeen men can effectively handle all the male parts. Hubert the Peasant and Evrard the Poet may fittingly double as the Narrators, without change of costume or make-up.

**Synopsis:** The Four Sons of Aymon — Renaud, Robert, Gerard and Allard — are Belgian folk heroes of the time of Charlemagne, their legendary enemy. He invades their country ruthlessly, besieges them, and hunts them down. But the gallant brothers find deliverance — and the fiercely loyal women they come to love — among their own people in the dark forests of the Ardennes.

**Production:** The play is an adventure-comedy, with strong elements of fantasy, in three acts and eight scenes. It is in prose, except for the final scene, where the Narrators "distance" the action by closing the tale with narrative verse addressed directly to the audience, in impersonal fashion.

Although written as a symbolic tale of the Belgian Resistance under Nazi tyranny, its topical parallels and patriotic fervor may have small point for American audiences. So the director must stress other dramatic values, of which there are plenty: broad comedy, four "love interests," exciting stage fights, and hairbreadth escapes. The adventures of the four brothers richly dramatize the theme of loyalty — "One for all, and all for one" — which has strong audience appeal.

The style of acting should be romantic, with plenty of sweep and dash and — most important of all — utter conviction in the playing. The director's chief problem will be largely solved, once he has got his cast to forget realism entirely, so that it can believe and enjoy acting out a medieval fairy tale. The director should not dodge the satirical elements (as in III-1, where we see the legend of the Four Sons growing swiftly without regard for the "facts"), but he should not let his actors "comment." Sincerity within a bravura style is essential, even for Marcus the Magician, who has a secret horror of the supernatural!

The play lends itself to spectacle in costuming and dramatic picturization, but the headlong action demands a swift flow of scenes. If this can be achieved, no cutting is required. It can be done with a unit set, using reversible pylons to switch the action from castle interiors to forest glade or army camp, and changing window-units and identifying banners. Few furniture properties are needed.

In staging the two fight scenes, sword-play can be avoided (a single armed equerry can be quickly disarmed by swinging a chair at him). Instead, grappling, fisticuffs, wild leaps and a few Judo "throws" will give the audience all the excitement it requires. In III-1, knifings can be masked convincingly. Incidentally, this scene has a blatantly "cliff-hanger" curtain. It is thematically justified, since the point is to show that the dangers the Four Sons face will never end. But the transition to the final scene — really an epilogue that takes place four years later — requires firm audience control. Since Elise, Renaud's wife, virtually "carries" this scene, the part definitely calls for an actress of considerable authority. (It is probably wise to keep her in ignorance of the technical problem of audience reaction and control which the scene poses!) Because of its swift changes of mood, often within a single scene, the play is a real test for the principal actors.

The final tableau, where the Four Sons appear transfigured, should be boldly theatrical. Figures can be projected on the cyclorama, or the actors themselves can be silhouetted with strong backlighting or spotlighted (preferably behind scrim), with the rest of the stage dimmed. Stirring music can be brought in to enhance the finale.

**Publisher:** As yet, the play is available only in manuscript from the translator, whose address is: Dept. of Speech and Drama, Loyola University, 6525 Sheridan Road, Chicago 26, Ill.

**Royalty:** Twenty-five dollars a performance. For extended runs, special arrangements may be made with the translator.

Hugh Dickinson  
Loyola University, Chicago, Ill.

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(Continued from page 2)

In "All For Love," the John Dryden play about Cleopatra, a courtyard within the Temple of Isis was suggested by hanging a striped cloth canopy over the acting area held up by black-lacquered bamboo poles crossed from one side to the other and held by vertical bejeweled poles. These indicated the opulence of an Oriental court. Two strip borders were used above the canopy which gave general illumination and created the feeling of the hot Egyptian sun beating down on the tent-like awning. Other spots were placed directly above the cotton hanging and shone through for special small diameter scenes. It must be admitted that the use of borders above a canopy-like ceiling, even though there is no light spill along the sides above the awning, does permit a general spill around the edges of the audience. This could have been a distraction in the case of "All For Love," a tragedy, but was compensated for by a soft, black net curtain, draped around the sides of the overhead canopy and fastened in graceful swags by heavy rope tassels, high enough so that sightlines were not impaired. In "Sam Ego's House," the spill didn't seem to matter what with the hectic antics in the play.

The use of ceiling devices was also of paramount importance in the presentation of Arena plays with the scrim device completely surrounding the acting area. Only four plays were produced during the operation of Fordham's Arena Theatre which used the net gauze container: "Crown Colony," "The Two Shepherds," "Voice in Rama" and "Cupid in the Cloister." It is interesting to note that all of these plays had a religious or spiritual background. The settings were also similar in that they were all set in some kind of cloistered garden, patio or courtyard. There is something meditative and spiritual about the scrim setting in the opinion of Mr. Riva and it seems to lend itself to plays of this type. The scrim softens and etherealizes. It seems to have a supernatural quality.

"Crown Colony" which was produced by Margaret Webster as "The Strong are Lonely" on Broadway this season takes place in a Jesuit common room in a monastery in Paraguay during the 17th Century. In the Fordham production, the bare ceiling in the arena was used. (It is only 10 feet above the floor.) The six twelve-inch diameter openings in the ceiling were then covered with floods which was all the light used. The light was accurately cold and hard but the scrim held the light within the room where the action was played and the decor and costumes of the period softened the picture.

With "The Two Shepherds" by Sierra-Martinez, the patio scene was covered by a trellis effect with leaves and vines worked into the cross-bars. Bare light bulbs were strung above this and the effect was very naturalistic with the light seeping through the twisting vines. Of course, there are many shadows with this kind of solution, but the arena has that quality of intimacy and the aesthetic distance is diminished so that typical stage lighting is neither

necessary nor desirable. The illusion of reality is so much better suggested when the lighting is naturalistic rather than artificial. The naturalism thus becomes theatrical!

"Cupid in the Cloister," an original, was also played in a walled garden with a vine and trellis effect. A summer house was added to the center of the area and a blue scrim sky through which borders and spots were used to illuminate the scene. They were unobtrusive because of the vines, flowers and leaves and gave the naturalistic quality the play seemed to demand.

So too, with "Voice in Rama," a biblical play — an olive tree at one end of the room with its branches stretching across the top of the stage — the spots and incandescents above it — filtered the light through to the actors. The remainder of the stage area was covered to suggest a clay or stone overhead with a large central opening. This was shaded by an oriental cloth with a cluster of spots above. The light beat down to simulate the tropical sun of the desert and the awning spread the light across the ceiling for as much general lighting as needed.

The examples already given may not appear simple because of what seemingly appears to be intricate scenic arrangements. And mostly over the actors! The ceiling device, it would appear, is definitely a factor in creating the illusionistic process in the arena. However, the hanging of such roof-life pieces can be as involved or as simple as time, expense and ingenuity will permit. The ill-fated Hotel Edison Arena used simpler devices to create the unity through scenic effect but they were overhead. In "Julius Caesar," a series of crossed sticks all converging in the center gave a kind of coherence to the upper regions. Chandeliers were used in their productions of "The Show Off" and "The Medium." "The Telephone" which is usually the curtain-raiser for the Menotti "Medium" also employed a chandelier effect at the Edison but this time it was an enormous flowered affair which complimented the delicacy and charm of the musical one-actor. These same type chandeliers might serve as single source lighting in other theatre-the-round productions and be tremendously effective, which is the kind of simplified lighting used by Penn State College for their arena production of "The Gentle People" described in PLAYERS MAGAZINE. Single source lighting emanating from a realistic overhead office desk light or a street lamp or a naked bulb in a steam bath, subtly complimented by a few other spots for toning did the trick here and I am sure was a potent force in creating real theatre and illusion.

An early arena experiment off Broadway was the use of nothing but six 120 watt incandescent lamps for a playlet "The Magic Mirror" which required a Chinese setting. These were hung around the edge of the acting area and covered with large Chinese lanterns. A reflector was placed inside the lantern on the audience side so as to concentrate the light in



the center on the actors and the play. The lighting resulting was general but it had a soft, Asiatic flavor and was exactly right for this charming fantasy. The play was done in this manner to prove that elaborate lighting systems are not necessary if we allow for imagination and taste.

Another tremendously effective device was used in a modern dress presentation of Marlowe's "Doctor Faustus" in a low-ceilinged theatre-in-the-round. The incantation scene wherein Faustus conjures up Mephistophiles was lighted by a small vigil lamp, a Christian symbol here used dramatically to invoke an evil demon. As Faustus leaned over the light, his hands and body made a fantastic and grotesque shadow on the ceiling. The shadows were eerie and frightening and contributed to the value of the scene. When the minion of Lucifer appeared, other lights were brought up to light the actors more fully. In the same production, when Faustus died, he was carried off by the seven sins. The three morning-suited devils now in shadowy blue light simultaneously dragged on cigarettes which glowed in the semi-darkness and as they followed off the cortege, the smoke was allowed to dribble slowly from their lips. A lighting effect was actually achieved here by three cigarettes and an idea!

In an Arena presentation of "The Doctor In Spite of Himself" produced as a rehearsal in Moliere's Studio, the lighting was accomplished by electrically wired chandeliers with candle-like fixtures. These were supplemented by a few spots. The whole arena area actually became the studio of Moliere and in this raucous and audience-participation play, the light spill seemed to be desirable.

There is no denying that lighting in our modern theatre can be "the star" of the show. It is the one new physical factor which we have today which can create mood, feeling, color and illusion. To simplify lighting for the Arena stage means only to use what you have as effectively as possible for the play and the place. Skill, imagination, ingenuity, resourcefulness, talent and experiment will also help. But then, that's how the craft of the theatre becomes the art of the theatre!

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by Lyn Oxenford

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## PLAY FESTIVAL PROGRAM OF TEXAS REGION

November 13, 14 and 15

Sponsored and Produced by  
Incarnate Word College  
San Antonio, Texas

### Critic Judges

Jean Taylor, San Antonio College  
Wm. McNulty, San Antonio Little Theatre

- BOX AND COX . . . St. Anthony's Junior Seminary  
Rev. John J. Ward, O.M.I., Director
- DARK EYES . . . Incarnate Word High School  
Peggy Sadler, Director
- STAINED GLASS . . . Ursuline Academy  
Arsenne Blonding, Director
- PINK AND PATCHES . . . Providence High School  
Sister Mary Michael, Director
- WHITE IRIS . . . Mount Carmel Academy  
Sister Peter Nolasco
- THE CRACKERBARREL . . St. Thomas High School  
Father W. W. Scott, Director
- ELMER CLEANS UP . . . St. Mary's High School  
Sister Mary Claude, O.P., Director
- THE STORM . . . Bishop Byrne High School  
Sister M. Clement, O.P., Director
- TELL DORIE NOT TO CRY St. Mary's High School  
Sister M. Ambrose, O.P., Director
- THE BOND BETWEEN . . Incarnate Word Academy  
Sister M. George and Marie Barnett, Directors
- THE POWERS THAT BE . . Ursuline Academy  
Mother M. Patrick, O.S.U., Director
- CONCERT IN THE PARK . . . St. Anthony's High School  
Sr. M. Catherine, O.P., Director
- RIDERS TO THE SEA . . . Our Lady of Victory  
Sister Marie Therese, Director
- WHITE IRIS . . . St. Agnes Academy  
June Reed, Director
- IDOLS . . . Dominican Academy
- OVER THE TEACUPS . . Incarnate Word Academy  
Sister M. Bernard, Director



## FESTIVAL NEWS

Mount Marty Fifth Annual Play Festival  
Yankton, South Dakota  
Held November 3, 1953 at Mount Marty College

Sister M. Jeanette, Chairman  
Sister M. Charitas (Minneapolis, Minn.), Chairman  
of the North Central Region of CTC — Critic-Judge

### UNDERCURRENT — Zeller

Notre Dame High School, Mitchell, So. Dakota  
Director: Sister M. Gonzaga, C.S.B.

### SUNDAY COSTS FIVE PESOS — Niggli

St. Mary's High School, Salem, So. Dakota  
Director: Sister M. Desideria, C.S.B.

### HIGH WINDOW — Bowers

Immaculate Conception High School, Stephen,  
So. Dakota  
Director: Sister M. Audrey, O.S.B.

### SPECIAL GUEST — Elser

Saint Agatha High School, Howard, So. Dakota  
Director: Sister M. Loyola, O.S.F.

### THE POWERS THAT BE — McCarthy

St. Paul's High School, Marty, So. Dakota  
Director: Rev. Roger Dieckhaus, O.S.B.

### THE UGLY DUCKLING — Mansur

Cathedral High School, Sioux Falls, So. Dakota  
Director: Sister M. Matthew, O.P.

### LADIES IN RETIREMENT (Cutting) — Percy and Denham

Mount Marty High School, Yankton, So. Dakota  
Director: Sister M. Jeanne, O.S.B.

Third Annual High School Play Festival

Clarke College, Dubuque, Iowa

November 14 - 15, 1953

Critic-Judge: Mr. John Tumpene, Drama Director,  
St. Mary's College, Notre Dame, Indiana

### THE PURPLE DOORKNOB — W. Eaton

Mount St. Gertrude Academy, Boulder, Colorado  
Director: Sister M. Marcellin, B.V.M.

### THE BLUE TEAPOT — Jean L. Latham

Our Lady of Victory High School, Waterloo, Ia.  
Director: Sister M. Thomas More, B.V.M.

### FATHER SAYS NO — Donald Payton

St. Martin's High School, Cascade, Iowa  
Director: Sister Mary Francette, B.V.M.

### BLUE STOCKING — Ruth Sergel

Xavier High School, Dyersville, Iowa  
Director: Reverend D. R. Voels

### IDOLS — Phoebe M. Rees

Immaculate Conception Academy, Davenport, Ia.  
Director: Sister M. Angelita, B.V.M.

### THE SAUSAGE MAKER'S INTERLUDE — Gheon

St. Clara Academy, Sinsinawa, Wisconsin  
Sister Mary Angele, O.P.

### UNDERTOW — A. Weatherly

Holy Angels Academy, Milwaukee, Wisconsin  
Director: Mr. Lee Jost

### ALL NIGHT SERVICE — Merivale

St. Joseph Academy, Des Moines, Iowa  
Director: Sister Mary Emily, B.V.M.

### BLUE STOCKING — Ruth Sergel

St. Patrick High School, Waukon, Iowa  
Director: Sister Mary Martin

### AIR TIGHT ALIBI — W. Hackett

Luana Consolidated High School, Luana, Iowa  
Director: C. L. Boyes

### SUMMER COMES TO THE DIAMOND O. — Robert Finch

Loras Academy, Dubuque, Iowa  
Director: Reverend Kenneth J. Lukan

### THE YOUNGEST — LeR. Rose

Sacred Heart Academy, Monticello, Iowa  
Director: Sister M. Annice, O.S.F.

### THE TRYSTING PLACE — Booth Tarkington

Aquinas High School, LaCrosse, Wisconsin  
Director: Sister M. Theodata, F.S.P.A.

### WHITE IRIS — R. Shannan

Immaculate Conception Academy, Dubuque, Ia.  
Director: Sister M. Generose, O.S.F.

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## SIXTH ANNUAL PLAY FESTIVAL

### TWIN CITY AREA

NOVEMBER 14, 1953

Sponsored and Produced by

Academy of Holy Angels

Minneapolis, Minnesota

Critic-Judge

Therese Marie Cuny

### THE CHARM RACKET .....

Academy of Holy Angels, Minneapolis

Sister M. Charitas, C.S.J., Director

### LATE HOLIDAY .....

St. Margaret's Academy, Minneapolis

Sister Mary Ruth, C.S.J., Director

### WHEN THE WHIRLWIND BLOWS .....

Our Lady of Peace High School, St. Paul

Sister Mary Denis, B.V.M., Director

### WHERE THE CROSS WAS MADE .....

Cretin High School, St. Paul

Brother William, F.S.C., Director

### WHEN SHAKESPEARE'S LADIES MEET

Academy of the Visitation, St. Paul

Miss Marcella Mamer, Director

### MINOR MIRACLE .....

DeLaSalle High School, Minneapolis

Mr. Robert Turner, Director

### WHITE IRIS ..... St. Joseph Academy, St. Paul

Sister Ireneaus, C.S.J., Director

### CRY HAVOC (Act 11) .....

St. Anthony High School, Minneapolis

Sister Maura, C.S.J., Director

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College of St. Francis (Joliet, Illinois) presented  
it's second Annual Play Festival for high schools on  
Saturday, November 21st in the college auditorium.  
Sister Margaret Mary of Aquinas High School, (Superior,  
Wisconsin) served as Critic-Judge.



